

Ref. EC370

August 17, 2022

Lieutenant General JAMES BIERMAN, Jr
Okinawa Area Coordinator
United States Forces Japan

Re: Request for authorization to conduct water testing at bases

Dear LtGen Bierman,

I would like to express my gratitude for your regular support to the water and environmental administration of Okinawa Prefecture.

It has been found that the level of two perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), PFOS and PFOA, in streams and springs in the vicinity of US bases in Okinawa exceeds the interim thresholds designated by the government of Japan—a matter of great concern to the citizens of Okinawa.

In order to mitigate this issue, I kindly request that on-site testing or sampling of water by Okinawa prefecture and relevant municipalities at bases be authorized, and that the United States Forces Japan and/or the government of Japan take mitigation measures including testing within bases, as the prefecture and relevant municipalities reasonably surmise these pollutants originate from the areas in question, taking the following background into account:

Since 2016, Okinawa prefecture has conducted water testing for PFASs (particularly PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, and 6:2 FTS) at streams and springs around US bases, and with these data available and in response to our call, the provisional guideline value in the environment and the target value for public water of PFOA and PFOS were set to 50 ng/L in total Japan.

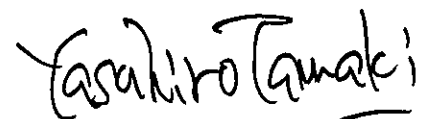
According to previous testing, high concentrations of the PFASs in springs near Kadena Air Base and Futenma Air Base have been detected on a regular basis, suggesting the source of contaminants. And in the town of Kin, whose source water flows from the area around Camp Hansen, the tested values of PFOA and PFOS exceeded the limit, which also indicates the base may be a cause. Besides, Chatan treatment plant, which takes water from the Kadena area, provides tap water to the base.

In order to mitigate its impact, we believe it is essential to identify the source of the contaminants and promptly implement countermeasures. We have appealed to the government of Japan and the USFJ to apply necessary procedures and to allow for on-site testing in the bases, but that has yet to materialize.

Additionally in June 15, 2022, the US Environmental Protection Agency announced it will apply stricter standards on health advisories for perfluoroalkyl substances, namely PFOS, PFOA, PFBS, and GenX on the grounds that these compounds were likely to induce adverse health effects on the human body.

I previously indicated my concerns to the Commander of USFJ on July 15, 2022, as attached, and hereby request your kind collaboration, in regard to the above.

Sincerely,



Yasuhiro Tamaki
Governor of Okinawa